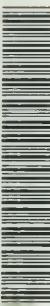


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SOCIALISM AND POLITICS
AN ADDRESS AND A PRO-
GRAMME BY J. W. MACKAIL

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IT MAY PERHAPS BE WITHIN THE recollection of some of this audience, that a year ago, in speaking of the final belief & practice of the greatest of English Socialists, I summed up his view as to the work & duty of the party in a single sentence indicating a single task. Their primary duty, their all-absorbing work, was to make Socialists: that, and that only.

The twelve months which have passed since then have not in the least altered my view as to the purport of the doctrine thus laid down by William Morris—and indeed he expressed it so often, so clearly, and so emphatically, that no doubt with regard to that is possible—nor my belief, if that were a matter of importance, that in taking up this ground he was profoundly right. But in asking you to consider with me this evening the relation between Socialism and Politics, I should like to look at the whole question in a somewhat fuller and larger way: partly in relation to history, that is, to ascertained facts: partly in relation to principle, that is, to the ideas behind and beyond facts: and partly also, though for the most part incidentally and by implication, in relation to what is called practical policy, that is, the application of principles or ideas to particular occasions and circumstances.

The subject is so large that no one will expect me to offer a complete view of it. The problems it raises are so complex that no one, I hope, will expect an attempt to settle them off hand. It will be sufficient if we can to a certain extent define the position in the light of theory and of history, and give some additional clearness to questions which are always more or less obscurely and confusedly before our minds. For, once a question is clearly understood, we are at least some way, and often more than half way, towards the answer ; and what we have to do daily in practice, or so it seems to me, is to be perpetually training & accustoming our minds to principles. If we could but move habitually in the atmosphere of great ideas, our practice would indeed still differ widely, as human action always will ; it might still, even among the most faithful, fall far short of our purpose. But we should at least have lifted ourselves one step up towards that community of ideas which is the substructure and the life of all realised or realisable communism.

In considering the relation of Socialism to Politics, the first thing that naturally occurs to one to ask is, what these two terms mean ; and the first obvious answer is, that they both ought to mean the same thing. Politics is an ancient

word of Greek origin: Socialism a modern word of Latin origin. The word Politics, as used by the Greeks, meant the theory and practice of human life as lived in the *polis*—the city, or state, or society, in which it as a matter of fact exists, and outside of which it cannot exist for any length of time or to any particular purpose. City, state, society are all three of them Latin words, which include among them the wider and vaguer meaning of the Greek word: and from the last of the three come the terms Social and Socialism. Socialism and Politics ought then to mean much the same. They ought to: perhaps some day they will: but they do not. Socialism is very generally regarded as an attack upon the city, upon the state, and above all, upon society, with a view to their destruction. As for Politics, whether in theory or practice, one is often reduced to the famous definition in Pickwick, that it surprises by itself. Hence the need of trying to ascertain the proper meaning of each term and its relation to the other.

Politics includes in its meaning the whole organic life of mankind outside of the individual. Where two or three are gathered together, there it is in the midst of them. Where many millions are dispersed abroad, there it embraces them in larger and larger circles, even to the end of the

world. The politics of any moment in any country is the process or struggle going on in the organic life of that country, through which and in virtue of which that life exists.

Socialism is the application to this organic life of certain ideas, partly economic, partly moral, few and simple in themselves, but multiform in their application, and changing their material embodiment with the general periodic movement of human affairs. On the economic side, its central idea is THE COMMUNISATION, THE PLACING IN THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNITY, UNDER THE COMMON CONTROL AND FOR THE COMMON GOOD, OF THE WEALTH WHICH THE COMMUNITY HAS INHERITED OR CREATED, AND OF THE MACHINERY FOR PRESERVING & INCREASING THAT WEALTH. On its moral side, its central idea is THE BROTHERHOOD OF MANKIND, & THE UNIMPEDED EXERCISE BY ALL OF THE HIGHEST FUNCTIONS & FACULTIES OF WHICH THEIR NATURE IS CAPABLE. The Socialism of any moment in any country is the application of these two ideas to human life as it then and there exists.

Therefore, in order to appreciate the import

which Politics have to Socialists, or which Socialism has to politicians, here at the present day, it is desirable to go back some way in order to trace the general course of both in times preceding our own. It is not necessary to go back to first beginnings. These are as old as the human race itself: and experience leads one to have some distrust in those specious epitomes of human history which sum up a thousand years in a couple of sentences. It will be sufficient to begin nearer home, and to go back just beyond the beginning of the late reign, to the year 1835; in which, it would appear, the word Socialism was invented, to describe a movement and a doctrine which until then had been too slight to require or suggest any specific name.

At the beginning of the Victorian age, the great revolution which created the modern world had just worked out its first results. The politics of the time before the revolution had been very simple except as regarded international relations. Within this island, as within each of the other dynastic units into which Europe was divided, the middle and lower classes were in subjection to a somewhat easy-going aristocracy. The workers who constituted the mass of the population had a status without any active

rights ; they were subject to all the inconveniences incident to being governed with habitually gross negligence and occasional savage cruelty, but on the whole kept dodging along in the shelter of many remnants of the kindlier constructive side of feudalism, and as far as can be judged, living a scanty but not unhappy life except where differences of race or religion came between a people and its rulers.

On that world came the revolution, in its two phases, industrial and political. It swept away, for good and evil, the remains of the mediaeval habits and beliefs that had supported what was left of the mediaeval organisation of society. From the chaos issued the two great guiding forces of the nineteenth century, democracy and capitalism. Their relations to each other, and to the remnants of the system they displaced, constitute the politics of the nineteenth century.

When in 1832 the territorial aristocracy abdicated, and handed over the control of the State to the middle classes, the new governing power was occupied, for about a generation, in abolishing, bit by bit, the remains of ancient privilege, whether of birth or religious creed or social status, and in clearing away the barriers which either old tradition or legislative enactment set in the way of unchecked individualism, and the

organisation of capital in such forms as it found most suitable for its own economic objects. At the same time the enthusiasm of the new age spent itself in enlarging the sphere of thought, in investigating nature and history with fresh interest, & in the humane endeavour to remedy what were then believed to be the temporary social evils incidental to a period of transition. The Factory Act of 1833 and the Poor Law Act of 1834 mark the beginning of this period, which not unfitly ends with the Education Act of 1870. During it, the governing middleclass, after much fluctuation, settled down into the two parties known as Liberals and Conservatives. The former professed principles of unchecked individualism, but its actual influence was towards freedom, and its actual legislation on the whole beneficial. The latter, after some half-hearted attempts to take the side of the people against the capitalists, and the side of order of some sort against economic anarchy, threw in their lot with capitalism and relapsed into the general position of opponents of reform. The feeling of the country was throughout these thirty-five years, from 1835 to 1870, predominantly Liberal. It was the epoch not in England alone, but throughout the world generally, of Liberal ascendancy. People looked forward

to the gradual and peaceful triumph of a complete democracy, and anticipated under it, not only the end of war between Governments, but diffused well-being among the peoples. In the way of social organisation, the country was still living on its inheritance from the past. The menace that lay in capitalism was not fully realised. "The exploitation of the world by association," a phrase which has since taken on it a sinister and tragic meaning, was actually the formula, in France and England, of the earlier Socialists. Legislation to counteract many of its most obvious oppressions and injustices was busily carried on. There was a sanguine belief that further legislation in the same sense from time to time would be easy, and would effect all that was necessary. If capitalism should net in the middle class electorate, it could still be checked, men thought, by extending the franchise to the working population. This was actually done for the urban districts in 1867: and there was still a large reserve in the rural labourers, that could be called up if necessary.

In the history of Socialism, these thirty-five years are a period of brilliant theorising and manifold experiment. It was only towards the end of them that Socialist thinkers settled down to work on the formation of a fixed doctrine

based on the study of ascertained facts. Until then, the relation of Socialism to Politics was either purely theoretic or violently revolutionary. The various experiments towards forming working models of Socialist communities —those of Fourier, Proudhon, Louis Blanc in France, of Owen and the Christian Socialists of 1850 in England—were after all only museum models, curious enough, but with little relation to the great movement of the world. Among the confusions of Central Europe in the early sixties, Lassalle, a Socialist leader of brilliant but undisciplined genius, began to rear in the last two years of his life a sort of fairy palace of constructive Socialism. At his death it collapsed as suddenly as it had risen. But it had during that brief and remarkable period been a political force of the first order, and entered into all sorts of relations with actual politics. Not only so: but in his hands Socialism had taken the fervour and the spiritual power of a new religion. Kings listened to him; whole cities poured forth from their gates to welcome him. It seemed for a while that a new world was in birth.

But the false dawn which thus flashed & faded away was the prelude to the actual morning, breaking grey and heavy among sullen clouds.

Within a month of Lassalle's death, the International was founded in London. Three years later, Marx published his treatise on Capitalism. The first of these incidents denotes the beginning of a concerted feeling and movement among the workers of all nations. The second (the defects and errors of Marx' book do not here concern us) denotes the foundation of Socialism as an inductive science, and the constitution of Socialists as a political party. Since then, that is to say for the last thirty-five years, the political action of the nations of Europe has been conducted with distinct reference, whether in the way of sympathy or of antagonism, to Socialist doctrine as in itself a political force; and conversely, Socialists of nearly every school have found themselves brought into a close relation with politics. It seems probable, that to future historians the period of between sixty and seventy years which we are considering, and to which the single long reign of the late Queen gives, in English eyes at all events, an imposing and irresistible unity, will appear to be sharply divided at its central point. It is generally recognised that the war of 1870 has made a profound difference ever since in the external or international politics of the world. With it, the era of triumphant Liberalism ended, and a new

age of blood and iron began. But its effects upon the internal or social politics of Europe were not less profound. To it were directly due the Commune of Paris, and the growth of the Social Democracy in the newly created organism of the German Empire. Here in England, people were slow to realise that any great change had happened. But it gradually became apparent that an age of reaction was setting in. In the previous generation, the reactionary party were being permeated by the ideas of progress. Even when they came into power they held it by a precarious tenure, and only on condition of carrying on the general progressive policy of their opponents. It was through the hands of Conservative Governments that the Liberal Party repealed the Corn Laws in 1846 and democratised the franchise in 1867. In the generation since 1870, the course of events has been almost exactly reversed. Liberalism became permeated by the ideas of reaction. Liberal Governments have been several times in office, but they have been there by sufferance, and have been almost powerless except by tacit understandings with their opponents. The general result was, that politics for a long time became more and more unreal, although, as if to make up for this, political controversies were con-

ducted with all or more than all the old violence of language and acrimony of abuse. Nearly twenty years ago, Matthew Arnold, who had a curiously dispassionate way of looking at his fellow-countrymen, wrote these remarkable words : “ I have no very ardent interest in politics in their present state, in this country. What interests me is English civilisation; and our politics, in their present state, do not seem to me to have much bearing upon that.”

Since then, the right wing of the Liberal Party, including the Whigs of the old governing class and the middle-class capitalists, have drifted in large numbers, with bag and baggage, over to the other side, which they have proceeded to permeate, to a greater degree apparently than the other side altogether like. The left wing, the Radical Party, which had been the propelling force of Liberalism, has fallen apart into two sections; the one holding up, with much constancy and energy, their ancient banners over a part of the field from which the combatants seem to have disappeared; the other gravitating towards Socialism, with the ideas of which they are largely infected, but towards which they are in a very perplexed attitude of mind—as, it is only fair to say, Socialists likewise are towards them. What, mean-

while, has been happening to the Socialist cause itself?

Before 1870 and for some years after, there was no Socialist Party in England, though there may have been groups of Socialists. Socialism was generally thought of as a thing that happened abroad. Of the three main forms which its political theory has taken—namely, State-Socialism, Communism, and Anarchism—the last has always been somewhat alien from the stolid and cautious English temper, with its love of compromise and its hatred of logic. Communism had only come before people in the shape of fragmentary experiments conducted by what might almost be called private enterprise, and quite remote from politics. State-Socialism was the only theory which stood out at all prominently to public view. A large number of Radicals of the working class found in it something that seemed to illuminate and explain what they had been vaguely feeling towards. After the break-up of the International in 1873 and the enforced or voluntary exile to England of many Continental Socialists from under the reactionary Governments of the French Republic and the German & Austrian Empires, London became a gathering point for all sections of the party. The Liberal Govern-

ment which was in office from 1880 to 1885 shared to a considerable extent in the wave of reactionary feeling which was passing through all Europe. Thus the Radicals were driven towards some sort of understanding with the new doctrine; and at the same time there arose among the other party the important movement towards a constructive policy known by the name of Tory Democracy. The golden days of illusion followed, which most of us can remember; the days when a new world seemed to be just across the threshold; when every morning brought Socialism new converts or martyrs; when, among a body weak in numbers and experience but high in enthusiasm, there rose what we can now see to have been fantastic projects and extravagant hopes; when the Social Revolution was confidently fixed for the year 1889, and the millennium for 1890. The policy of Parliamentarianism was then denounced, less on grounds of principle, than because it seemed to so many a slow and cumbrous way of reaching a result that could be attained much more swiftly, as well as much more completely, through revolution—not the secular revolution of ages, but the brief cataclysm followed by a new heaven and a new earth which was a fixed idea with Marx, and which in many people's

minds had enwound itself inextricably with his economic theory, if indeed it were not the single part of his teaching that they fully grasped or welcomed.

The Marxian idea of revolution has, I suppose, now taken its place in history among the ranks of obsolete theories. Of whatever nature the revolution will be towards which Socialists now work, and in which they have an unquenchable ultimate belief, it will hardly be of this. The revolution is not an act, but a process. So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knows not how. The kingdom of God comes not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

The notion then was that of capturing the machine. It was to obtain control over the organism of society by a mixture of adroitness, prestige, and main force, and start it running in a new direction. But capitalist society was no mere passive structure of rods and cylinders. It was alive; it had the power of growth and the instinct of self-preservation; it adapted itself to every change in its environment, and drove the men who called themselves its drivers.

To Socialism as a body of economic doctrine it opposed the iron law of wages. To Socialism as an organisation it opposed a society already organised, whose structure became, year by year, more perfect under the pressure of the struggle for existence, and the inflexible law of the survival of the fittest. To Socialism as a revolt of the human instincts against squalor, monotony, and misery it was able to oppose a thousand palliative measures, dictated by good-nature, by refinement, often by an ardent philanthropy; and not, as was once too freely said or thought, by fear.

I would lay stress on this last point. For it must not be forgotten that capitalism is no force external to the human race. We are all, Socialists and non-Socialists alike, members of a capitalistic society; and that society consists wholly of human beings, endowed from birth with some sense of beauty, with some instinct towards justice and mercy, with conscience, honour, religion. The result is that strange paradox of a society more and more helplessly bound to the wheels of capitalism, and yet more and more willing and eager to apply remedies to the ghastly results which the reign of capitalism brings. The case is not uncommon of a man whose whole place and work in the social

system consists in the exploitation of labour, but with whom this is almost without his knowledge or almost against his will; and who is continually engaged, with the part of him that is really alive, in trying to make the world less cruel, less ugly, less unhappy; in lightening, at such points as he can reach, the pressure of the system which he is helpless to alter, and does not wish altered. This is perhaps one of the most tragic features of a capitalist society, that the best of its energy and the highest of its virtue has to be devoted to the elaborate, and after all the ineffective, undoing of its own work. Of the war between capitalism & labour, it may be said with some measure of truth, not only that it is inevitable, but that it is conducted with unexampled humanity. Why it should be inevitable, or what is the sum of the cruelty & suffering, the waste & shame, after which all this humanity toils at such a distance, is another and a graver matter. Perhaps three-fourths of modern legislation has for its real object to set barriers against that vast pressure underwhich the rich must needs become always richer and the poor always poorer, and both classes, rich & poor alike, must always live further and further away from happiness. To Socialists alone it has been given to foresee a time

when there shall be neither poor nor rich, when war between classes, like war between nations, shall not be inevitable but inconceivable, and when a humanity, not then unexampled; but as natural and simple in its life as the drawing of one's breath, shall no longer have to weary itself out on the desperate task of patching up, but flow forth in endless and unimpeded energy to increase the beauty, the joy, the well-being of the whole world. ABOVE AND BEYOND SOCIALISM AS AN ECONOMIC DOCTRINE, AS A CONDITION OF SOCIETY, AS A PROTEST AGAINST MISERY, STANDS SOCIALISM AS AN IDEAL AND A RELIGION.

This ideal, this religion, is a thing independent of organisations and policies. Whether a man is a Socialist in the inmost meaning of the term, or not, depends not on what party he belongs to, or what line of political action he takes, but simply on whether or not he has this religion within him. The true Socialist Party consists of all people who have: nor will there ever be a united Socialist Party until all the world is Socialist. There will be no question then as to the relations between Socialism and Politics; for the two will then have reverted to their common meaning, and be one and the same thing.

I have wandered far from my immediate subject and returned to it by a rather circuitous road. But now to revert to the questions as to the relation of Socialism to the Politics of the present day, which must be continually pressing on the mind of every thoughtful Socialist.

The possible kinds of this relation, according to any abstract or logical division, are many. Practically, they may be reduced to three, each of which, while not wholly excluding the others in certain cases, has a general unity sufficient to make it at least a basis for concerted and consistent action. These three methods do not cover the whole ground of practice. Not only are there various degrees of compromise between them, but beyond them on either hand is a large region of practice as to which no difference of opinion can arise. Outside of all controversies as to method there lies, on the one hand, that first, and last, and perpetual work of making Socialists; on the other hand, the fixed habit, just as applicable to politics as to individual daily life, of distinguishing sharply between what is right and what is wrong, of taking pains to do right instead of doing wrong, and of not deliberately doing wrong under any plea or pretext whatever. But as regards that

part of life which bears a direct relation to politics, local or national, there are broadly these three principles. First, that principle well put in words which I quote from the last number of the "Independent Labour Party News," that Socialists should confine themselves to the work of preaching the pure gospel and to holding up the ideal steadily, uninfluenced by any compromise or alliance. Second, the principle of an alliance with the advanced wing of that party which calls itself variously Progressive, Radical or Liberal, on a basis of compromise and mutual permeation. Third, the principle of seeking direct representation of Socialism, in the House of Commons and in the lesser local councils of the kingdom, by a group of Socialist members holding itself apart from and independent of all other parties. These may respectively be called, as regards politics, the method of abstention, the method of permeation, and the method of interference.

Before proceeding to consider them further there are two remarks I should like to make: in the first place, that for all Socialists alike who live in the world as it now is, some amount of compromise, some inconsistency between their doctrine and their practice, is inevitable. The same is true of other classes of men as

well. No Christian, for example, actually lives, however sincere his belief, in accordance with the doctrines of the Christian religion. Some come nearer to doing so than the rest, and they are the saints. No capitalist actually lives, even so far as the law would permit him, on a wholly capitalistic basis. Some come nearer to doing so than the rest; & they are the unpaid agitators and the standing object-lessons of Socialism.

The other remark I would make is, that I exclude from consideration a wrecking policy; that of the deliberate destruction of civilisation, such as it is, the good with the bad; of a war of revenge and subjugation against capital; a policy of opposing measures of social amelioration (even though they be only palliative and fall short of the true remedy), in order that the unchecked horrors of capitalist control may swell to such a growth as will make a violent revolution inevitable. Such a policy may have been advocated or adopted by men maddened by injury. It has been rejected by all the best Socialists, not so much because it is foolish, as because it is wrong. So that the preacher of the pure gospel & holder up of the ideal need have no quarrel with his fellows who go to work in politics: nor need they have any quarrel with him.

Now, within the last few years there may be traced—doubtfully perhaps : I would not insist on this with too much confidence—a certain increase of reality in English politics, both national and local. The penetration of Socialist ideas has already gone so far that a certain amount of Socialist or semi-Socialist work is actually being done through a capitalist Parliament and capitalist municipalities. The more of such work is done, by whatever hands, the greater is the advance made in what is the present-day work of the Socialist Party, education towards revolution. Even what is called gas and water Socialism is not without this educational side. The nationalisation, or municipalisation, of large public services constitutes a series of useful object-lessons towards the communisation of capital and machinery. The extension of a general control by Government over the conditions of industry is a step, though but a small one, on the way towards the freeing of labour. The provision, by definite enactment, of a living wage both for workers and for those who cannot or ought not to work—a provision which the younger generation may possibly live to see—may result in so great a bettering of the physical life of the people as will enable the preaching of

Socialism to be carried on under far more favourable conditions. Among men and women decently fed, housed, clothed, instructed, and leisured, not dull with hunger, sodden with ignorance, debauched with feeble and vicious excitement, it may become, instead of a gospel of discontent and revolt, a gospel of hope and progress; though still, and still as much as ever, the hope of and the progress towards revolution.

If, then, the amelioration of the conditions of labour through the public opinion and the legislative action of a capitalist society all works towards the interest of Socialism, a policy of mere abstention from political life cannot be universally applicable, and, for most Socialists, the question comes to be how far, in given circumstances, a policy of interference in politics is either practicable or useful. Can they help the general cause of Socialism forward by throwing in their lot with that party, or that section, or that organisation, which among a capitalist society most favours progress, and by seeking to permeate it more and more with Socialist doctrine? Can they obtain a more direct expression for their views and a wider currency for their teaching, through returning individual Socialists as members of

the local councils and of the great council of the nation? Either course has its dangers. Against the first, there is the old rock of intrigue on which so many ships have split: the risks of corruption, of slackening of enthusiasm and weakening of principle through compromise: the constant tendency to go off on side issues: the certainty that a permeating process will not be all on one side; and the possibility at least, that a gas and water Socialism, cut away from its deepest roots, may forget its highest aims, and itself dissolve into mere gas and water. Against the second, there are the considerations, that the party would thus condemn itself, for years to come, to an isolation ill borne by small numbers and puny resources; that, as regards the House of Commons at all events, very few Socialists could possibly get into Parliament, or be sure of staying in it if they did: that the failure of the representatives of any movement to produce tangible or impressive results is apt to react unfavourably on the movement; and lastly, that on the Socialist members themselves, the picked men of their party, there would be imposed a life artificial, wearisome, full of temptations, full of disappointments, and perhaps beyond their strength. Many a man has got into Parlia-

ment only to find that he was doing better work out of it, and to wish himself back on the open road. The fact is, that representation in Parliament, like the numerical superiority of one party to another in Parliament, is not what really moulds and turns the main channel of legislative action. What does that, is public opinion : and to public opinion Parliament is acutely and tremulously sensitive ; while the opinion of some half dozen of its own members is a thing it can cheerfully neglect.

Now, as it will be for a long time yet, the Socialist Party in England is numerically small everywhere, and only exists at all, for practical purposes, in a few of the large centres of population. To be frank, I must add that when considerations as to its secondary work in politics arise, one is not able to give a very satisfactory answer to the question how it is performing its primary work, that of making Socialists. Among the working class it does not spread fast. Among the wealthier and more educated —for they, no less than the poor, have need of the new gospel—its work has barely begun. It is through the education of opinion, among rich and poor alike, that the only way lies towards that common well-being which shall have need of neither riches nor poverty. The old error

still lurks in some minds, that Socialism is something which can be imposed on society by force or palmed off on society by clever management. But the prospects of Socialism would be poor indeed, if its object were to beat down & hold down the forces of wealth, intelligence, and trained capacity by the forces of poverty and ignorance.

On the other hand, direct political action may be and sometimes is a means of spreading doctrine. Even as regards the specific matter of Parliamentary elections, there seems no valid reason why, from this point of view, a Socialist candidate should not be regularly put forward in every constituency where there is any considerable nucleus of Socialists, irrespective of any other candidates or candidatures whatsoever. Such a candidate would hardly ever, as things stand now, get into Parliament ; nor, in view of the considerations I have been urging, would it matter so very much whether he did or not. As the number of such cases grew, the moral effect of many unsuccessful attacks would be equivalent to that of a few showy successes ; for it is not the local victory or the local defeat that matters, but the spread of the doctrine. It cannot be doubted that a substantial Socialist vote throughout the country would impress

public feeling and impel public action in a very marked degree, even though not a single Socialist candidate obtained a seat in Parliament.

At the present moment such a course of action is impracticable in the vast majority of cases, for various reasons, which pretty much sum themselves up in this, that there are not enough Socialists to do it. A Socialist candidature in fifty constituencies of Great Britain would certainly for years to come be a liberal allowance—so liberal that some might regard it as almost fantastic—but that would still leave five hundred more unprovided for. In some of these, compromise & alliance would be not only possible but clearly desirable. The amount of common ground between Socialists and an ordinary political candidate on the progressive side, as regards work towards the betterment of the people, is often so great that Socialists, whether as individuals or as a party, might cheerfully give him active support. There is nothing in the principles of his belief which debars a Socialist, as things are, from supporting one capitalist candidate as against another, if the return of the former will to a substantial degree help to promote the social changes which may form a basis for the enlarged, purified and deepened Socialism of the future. But there will be many cases, prob-

ably the majority, in which the candidates put forward by both political parties profess a doctrine and policy almost equally alien from all that Socialists believe or respect. It is impossible, as things are now arranged, to vote impartially against both. It is true that people desirous of doing so might go to the poll and deliberately record spoiled votes, and such a course would have at least one great merit—it would keep men up to the sense of civic right and duty, and check the tendency, already great, towards sulking, and a final state of mere apathy towards the common national life. But, while not unworthy of serious consideration, the plan is subject to obvious abuses, and might have to be dismissed as too fanciful for use. On the other hand, to bring the Socialist vote into the market, to hold it in suspense, and use it as a negotiable counter in view of some remote contingency or refined strategy, is a policy that comes too near intrigue to be either safe or quite honourable. In such cases it is a grave question whether the only safe rule is not inflexible abstention. But here, as elsewhere, one is continually being brought back to the old point, that it is no use being over-engrossed with organising until there is something more to organise, and that what is to be done,

above all and before all, is to go on making Socialists.

We stand on the verge of times in which it is possible that the making of Socialists may start on a wholly new course of expansion. Allow me to quote from the "Manchester Guardian" of 31st January last the following striking passage, written in connection with the return of a Socialist, from a constituency hitherto represented by a Liberal, to an Imperial Parliament:

"It is pitiable to see the once powerful and generous National Liberal Party ranged among the forces of reaction, and defeated at the polls as an enemy to the policy which it advocated so powerfully thirty years ago. But ever since that fatal day when a section of the National Liberals deserted their principles the party has steadily declined in numbers and influence. It has wiped its slate clean, with the result that the work of spreading Liberal principles and making head against the Tory reaction has devolved upon the Radicals & Socialists, & the National Liberal Party is doomed to disappear."

The Imperial Parliament referred to is that, not of the United Kingdom, but of the German Empire. But even from the Germans we may in this, as in other matters, perhaps learn a lesson. We are accustomed, ever since the start that this

country took at the industrial revolution, to think of ourselves as a generation ahead of the other nations of Europe. But Nature has her compensations, and in some respects we may be a generation behind. Here in England, the age of blood and iron has barely begun. It began in Germany thirty years ago, with the pride and wealth that followed the war through which Germans awoke to a sense of their imperial destiny. Thirty years of militarism and reaction, of forced markets & heavy taxation, might possibly lead, in England also, to the decay and political extinction of nineteenth-century Liberalism. It would be the Radicals & Socialists who would then have to carry on the struggle against the armed & organised forces of capitalism. Nor is it inconceivable, that it would then be the business, less of Socialists to consider an alliance with an already permeated Radicalism, than of Radicals to consider an alliance and incorporation with an already permeating Socialism.

I take, simply as an instance that lies closest at hand, the address issued the other day by the Socialist candidate to the electors of Dewsbury. I do not desire to express any opinion on that address, but only to call attention to a very significant feature it presents. Two-thirds of that address might have been issued by a Radical

candidate of the Liberal left wing. The other one-third, which is the most important, could not. But why? It simply states the principles, the ideas, upon which the remaining two-thirds are based. Progressive policy cannot for ever sustain itself upon detached measures without any consistent base of ideas: and the more such a base is sought, the more plain it becomes that it is in the fundamental doctrine of Socialism that such a base can alone be found.

And in view of this, it is more than ever necessary that Socialism itself should keep, in these evil days, a pure heart and clean hands.

PROGRAMME

THE OBJECT OF LABOUR IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN FACULTIES AND THE PRODUCTION THROUGH THEM OF WHATEVER HUMAN LIFE REQUIRES FOR USE AND ENJOYMENT.

PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF THE MATERIAL AND MACHINERY OF PRODUCTION, AND COMPETITIVE PRODUCTION FOR PRIVATE PROFIT, ARE FOUNDED ON INJUSTICE AND SUSTAINED BY FORCE, REQUIRE PERPETUAL LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCE TO ALLEVIATE THEIR CONSEQUENCES, AND ARE INCONSISTENT WITH ANY STABLE AND PERMANENT CIVILISATION.

It follows from these principles that:

The land, which is the inheritance for life of each generation of mankind, should be resumed into communal ownership.

The capitalised wealth by means of which fresh wealth is created, and that fresh wealth as it in turn becomes capital, should be owned and used by the community for the common good.

To the community each individual or group of individuals should contribute all reasonable

work and service ; from the community each individual or group of individuals should receive all reasonable comfort, instruction, recreation and enjoyment.

These aims can only be fully attained in a fully Socialised Commonwealth. Our object at the present day is to work for such provisional and intermediate ends as seem best adapted to make the birth of such a commonwealth possible.

As means, among others, to this end, we advocate the following measures.

1. A maximum eight hours working day and six days working week.

2. Work at recognised trade union rates with a statutory minimum living wage.

3. Compulsory powers to all public elective bodies of acquiring land ; of building or maintaining thereon houses for the people, schools, libraries, hospitals and all other kindred institutions ; of carrying on industries necessary for the common welfare ; and of levying rates for these purposes.

4. Adequate provision for sick, disabled, and superannuated workers, for orphan children, and for women whether single or widowed who are otherwise without sufficient support.

5. Free and secular national education from

the elementary schools to the Universities both inclusive.

6. The abolition of child labour for wages, and its stringent regulation when not for wages.

7. Public ownership and control of all statutory monopolies such as railways, tramways, electric light and power, gas and water, and the traffic in intoxicating liquors.

8. Readjustment of taxation so as to proportion its burden to the capacity of bearing it.

9. International courts of arbitration.

10. Continuous and systematic reduction of armaments, both military and naval, with a view to their total suppression except so far as required to preserve internal civic order.

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